



# County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health



## GETTING THE FACTS ON *TRANS* FAT!

### What is *trans* fat?

- A type of fat formed when liquid oils are made into solid fats (shortening and hard margarine)
- A small amount is found naturally in some animal-based foods
- *Trans* fats are made when hydrogen is added to vegetable oil (hydrogenation process) to increase shelf life and flavor stability of foods

### What are problems associated with *trans* fat?

- They raise low-density lipoprotein (LDL or bad) cholesterol that cause coronary heart disease (CHD) leading to heart attacks and stroke
- 12.5 million Americans suffer from CHD and more than 500,000 die each year
- Estimated number of premature, preventable deaths each year attributed to the consumption of artificial *trans* fats is on the order of 30,000 to 100,000

### What foods contain *trans* fat?

- They are often found in processed foods made with partially hydrogenated vegetable oils like shortening, hard margarines, crackers, candies, cookies, snack foods, fried foods, and baked goods

### What are the labeling requirements on food items?

- As of January 1, 2006, food manufacturers must list *trans* fat on the nutrition label
- The FDA requires the amount of *trans* fat in a serving to be listed on a separate line under saturated fat on the Nutrition Facts panel
- Manufacturers may list *trans* fat with less than 0.5 grams as 0 (zero)
- *Trans* fat will be listed only in gram amounts since daily values have not been established



Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 1.5g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	

### **Are there any health benefits?**

- There are no known health benefits from consuming hydrogenated *trans* fat

### **Are all fats bad for me?**

- Fat is a major source of energy for the body and aids in the absorption of vitamins A, D, E, and K and carotenoids
- It is important for growth, development, and maintenance of good health
- Fat provides taste, consistency, and stability

### **What actions can I take to lower my *trans* fat intake?**

- Choose foods with lower saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol (check the nutrition facts)
- Replace saturated and *trans* fat with monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats. These do not increase LDL and may provide some health benefits when eaten in moderation.
- Consider the use of vegetable oils (except coconut and palm kernel) and soft margarines (liquid, tub, or spray)
- Eat foods like fish that are lower in saturated fat instead of meat
- Limit foods high in cholesterol (liver, organ meats, egg yolks, full-fat dairy products)
- Choose foods low in saturated fat (1% dairy products, lean meats, fish, skinless poultry, whole grain foods, fruits, and vegetables)

### **Where can I get further information?**

(Just type *trans* fat in the search box on the listed web site)

- [www.cfsan.fda.gov](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov)
- [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)
- [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

Educated consumers can make educated choices.